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life; it is a reflex *sui generis*, an intangible factor; it changes weight and direction according to whether it is studied in one country or in another, on the level of official life or on that of the populace. So that the rather scornful judgement of the Czech statesmen seems to us to be inspired by a too exclusively historical interpretation of the facts. To find a solution to the controversy which opposed the Yugoslavs and the Czechs, it is sufficient to recall their own relations. From 1919 to 1939 these relations were, for confidence and cordiality, unequalled between any two Latin or Germanic peoples. Naturally, they benefited by memories still present in all minds. No man, more than Masaryk, had contributed by his person to the formation of the generations which supplied their *cadres* to the emancipated nationalities. His courageous attitude during the trial of Friedjung—the author of the false documents on which the leaders of the Serbo-Croat Party had been charged with high treason—had won for him the gratitude of all Yugoslavs. During the crisis over the annexation of Bosnia, martial law had been proclaimed in Prague because the town rang with cries of 'Long live Serbia!' At the time of the Albanian crisis of 1912–1913, the 28th and 102nd Infantry, two entirely Czech regiments, on their way to the frontier, had been greeted in all the stations with cries of '*Slava Srbum!*' (Long live the Serbs). In the First World War, the Czech soldiers and officers of the Army of Occupation in Serbia had treated the inhabitants with all possible consideration.

But, once we have admitted this, we shall not wrong either the Czechs or the Yugoslavs if we affirm that they have very few traits of character, even very few sentimental affinities, in common. The Czech is hard-working, positive, a deliberator, economical. The Serb is a fatalist, emotive, spontaneous, lavish. Resistance to oppression—the common denominator of their history—has been expressed by very different reactions, masked among the Czechs, explosive among the Serbs. So that it is difficult not to put to the credit of Slav solidarity—that solidarity judged by Czech statesmen politically inoperative or out-of-date—the close relations between two countries connected neither by geography nor by tradition nor by psychology. It will be said that they have the same enemies, which is sufficient reason for an understanding. Arguing on these lines, the relations between

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part of the Quay d'Orsay. How great was his surprise at not hearing, during his audience, any reference to the Franco-Soviet pact! On the point of taking leave of Laval, he ventured to congratulate the latter on the results of his journey to Moscow. Laval cut in: 'Don't talk of it! I wish I could cut off the hand that signed the pact. Take great care you don't do the same!'

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But, still more than the Western policy of the Soviets, it was their work of 're-nationalisation' which impressed the Slavonic world. The brilliance with which the commemoration of the death of Pushkin was celebrated, in 1937, was the first manifestation of this 'Russian drive' abroad. No poet was more 'national' than Pushkin, despite his African blood. He re-created three centuries of Russian life in a profusion of dazzling images. He rendered, more expressively than any writer, the escapist fever of the men of his time and the nostalgic tonalities of the steppes of his country. Great Russian Literature begins with him, and one of his compatriots wrote: 'In Pushkin lies our whole patrimony'. The *Izvestia* declared that it was only with Sovietisation that the masses of the people got to know the true figure of the poet and the meaning of his work. This paper heaped scorn alike on the 'vulgar sociologists' who made of him a wild revolutionary, and the 'ignoramuses' who found nothing useful for Socialist culture in his poetry. And the Government had his works translated into all the languages of the Union.

The extent of this homage was a prelude to a general policy of rehabilitation of Russian values. In the first Bolshevist ideology, Russia was represented as the nonchalant and sub-lunary being typified by Oblomov, the dressing-gowned hero of a celebrated novel by Gontcharov. Oblomov is a sort of Russian 'Triplepatte',[•] incapable of taking any decision, and established in the lazy, useless life of a country proprietor. We may say in passing that this picture of the Russian people is not a very true one: it confuses the 'moon-struck' state with inertia. Left to themselves, these people do sometimes lack application, or steadfastness, but if well directed, they are capable of prodigies of energy. For having dared to evoke this classical type, and the mentality to which it has given its name, 'oblomovtchina', Bukharin was accused of having borrowed 'a poisoned arrow

• 'Triplepatte' is the hero of a comedy of the same name, by Tristan Bernard and André Godfernaux. (Trans. note.)